

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 and 5-8 are pending in the above-identified application. Claim 4 has been incorporated into claim 1 and claim 9 cancelled.

Allowable Claims

Claims 2-3 and 5-8 have been indicated as being fully allowable. Claim 4 was indicated as being allowable and was merely objected to as depending upon a rejected base claim, i.e. claim 1. Claim 4 has been incorporated into claim 1 and correspondingly cancelled. Thus, all of claims 1-3 and 5-8 are now in allowable form.

Removal of Bases for Outstanding Rejections

Claims 1 and 9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being unpatentable over JP '553 (Japanese Patent Application No. 2003-0555553).

Claims 1 and 9 have also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Kleyer '587 (USP 6,017,587).

The bases for the above-noted rejections have been removed upon the incorporation of allowable claim 4 into claim 1, as well as the cancellation of claim 9. Consequently, it is requested that these rejections be withdrawn.

Conclusion

It is submitted for the reasons stated above that the present claims define patentable subject matter such that this application should now be placed condition for allowance.

If any questions arise regarding the above matters, please contact Applicant's representative, Andrew D. Meikle (Reg. No. 32,868), in the Washington Metropolitan Area at the phone number listed below.

Application No.: 10/626,669

Docket No.: 0171-0995P

Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 02-2448, under Order No. 0171-0995P from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: July 8, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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